

Latin American Immigrants in the Washington, DC Metropolitan area: History and Demography

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Introduction

As the nation's capital, Washington DC has long been an international city. However, it has only recently joined the ranks of major metropolitan immigrant destinations. In 1970, less than five percent of greater Washington's population was born outside the United States. By 2005 one in five persons was foreign-born.¹ While the entire metropolitan area population grew by 56 percent between 1980 and 2006, the immigrant population quadrupled during the same period. Greater metropolitan Washington now ranks as the 7th largest metropolitan concentration of immigrants in the United States.

Washington fits into a class of metropolitan areas that have recently emerged as immigrant gateways. Places like New York and Chicago have held an attraction for immigrants throughout the 20th century, and large metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles and Houston rapidly gained foreign-born residents after World War II. In the 1980s and especially the 1990s, settlement patterns began to shift away from more traditional settlement areas to places with little history of immigration. Washington, along with places like Atlanta, Dallas, and Phoenix, have in the last decades of the twentieth century become significant destinations due to burgeoning job markets, particularly in the construction, services, and technology sectors. By 2006, metropolitan Washington's foreign-born population had grown to over one million, 20 percent of the total population.

Before World War II Washington resembled more of a Southern town than an international city. As the national capital, Washington historically has had a presence of foreign-born residents. Unlike other cities along the Eastern seaboard, however, Washington never developed an industrial base; therefore there were few opportunities that drew immigrants to the city, and even fewer that kept them there (Singer and Brown 1999).

In the latter decades of the twentieth century, the Washington region grew, in large part due to the economic stability offered by the expansion of the federal government, international organizations and embassies, and universities, all of which attracted both native and foreign-born population. In addition, since the late 1970s, the U.S. government has resettled thousands of refugees in the region. Washington's increasing internationalization that began largely with professionals and students has continued with both high- and low-skilled immigrants arriving through networks that join them to family members and friends already living in the region. Washington maintains a growing economy and a growing population.

Latin Americans in the Washington region have a unique history which has resulted in a national origin composition that is considerably different from other metropolitan areas. Washington's Latin American and Caribbean immigrants make up 40 percent of all immigrants in the region. Washington's largest immigrant group is from El Salvador, currently the second largest Salvadoran population among U.S. metropolitan areas, after Los Angeles. However, the earliest waves of Latin American and Caribbean immigrants arrived from Cuba and the Dominican Republic beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, joining Puerto Ricans and South Americans from a handful of countries including Bolivia and Peru. This early wave of immigrants included professionals and students seeking higher education (Cadaval, 1989). In the 1980s, migrants began to flee from Central America, as civil wars intensified in several countries and as natural disasters further devastated living conditions and local economies.

The seeds of Central American migration began in the 1960s and 1970s with the recruitment of domestic workers, mostly women, by Central American diplomatic and international staff (Repak, 1995). As family members and friends escaped the turmoil in El Salvador, Guatemala, and other Central American countries, they joined these earlier migrants, and the immigrant population became more gender-balanced. Today the population has slightly more men than women. In the 1980s, many of the migrants settled in neighborhoods in the District of Columbia, such as Mount Pleasant and Adams Morgan, where Latin Americans working in

nearby embassies lived (Cadaval, 1996). Eventually, many of the initial immigrants dispersed to suburban areas in both Maryland and Virginia.

The United States is in the midst of a national debate over the role of immigrants in the economy and society. One result of this debate is that Latin American immigrants are increasingly becoming targets of local legislation designed to restrict access to services or make them feel unwelcome. While most of the rhetoric and policy changes are aimed at those without legal status, in the public's mind there is often no distinction made between immigrants with and without legal status. Likewise public officials do not present a reassuring case that legal immigrants will not be caught up in the enforcement of new provisions intended for the undocumented. Immigrants fear being singled out based on the way they look or speak. A deliberate blurring of those distinctions, often for political reasons, has created a socially hostile environment in some local areas, including the Washington metropolitan area. In light of this ongoing debate, this chapter examines the socio-demographic characteristics of the region's Latin American and Caribbean foreign-born population and changes between 1980 and 2006.

DATA AND METHODS

This chapter uses data from the 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial censuses and the 2006 American Community Survey (ACS) administered by the Census Bureau. The terms *immigrant* and *foreign-born* are used interchangeably. The *foreign-born* population encompasses persons born outside the United States, including naturalized U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, temporary immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and, to the extent to which they are counted, undocumented immigrants.

Latin American immigrants are defined as persons born in any country in the Western Hemisphere other than the United States and Canada; that is, all of the countries located in

Central America, South America, the Caribbean, and Mexico, regardless of language spoken, heritage, or race/ethnicity. This geographic decision is based on the way the data are structured by the U.S. Census Bureau, making it impossible in many cases to disaggregate the data geographically. Thus, all foreign born from Latin America and the Caribbean are combined and referred to as “Latin American immigrants.”

The Washington metropolitan area definition used in this paper consists of 22 jurisdictions, following the 2003 OMB standards. In this analysis, the city of Alexandria and Arlington County are referred to as the *inner core*. The *inner suburbs* include Prince George's, Montgomery, and Fairfax counties and all jurisdictions contained within their boundaries. The *outer suburbs* include Loudoun and Prince William counties and the jurisdictions contained within them. The remainder of the metropolitan area is combined. In 2006, data are unavailable for smaller counties and cities; therefore those jurisdictions (i.e. the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park) are included in the “remainder of the metropolitan area.” Thus, data from that year are not strictly comparable to the “remainder” in earlier years, but they provide a rough estimate of population change at the local level.

FINDINGS

A. The birth countries of immigrants arriving to the Washington metropolitan from Latin America have changed during the past 25 years, from primarily South American and Caribbean origins to majority Central American countries. While most contemporary immigrant gateways have a large proportion of foreign-born residents from Mexico, Washington's largest group is from El Salvador and the mixture of origin countries throughout Latin America is remarkably diverse.

To provide context of the larger immigrant and refugee population, Table 1 shows the 30 largest countries of origin among Washington's immigrant population in 2006. Four Latin

American countries are among the top ten: El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala, and Bolivia. El Salvador is the largest source country in the metropolitan area, with 133,000 estimated in 2006, more than twice the size of the next largest country of origin, India.² Also among the top ten origin countries are five Asian countries—India, Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines and China—and Ethiopia.

Table 1. Top Countries of Birth for the Foreign-born Population in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 2006

	2006	
	Estimate	Percent
Total Foreign Born	1,063,033	100.0
1 El Salvador	133,191	12.5
2 India	62,311	5.9
3 Korea	58,934	5.5
4 Mexico	43,633	4.1
5 Vietnam	43,215	4.1
6 Philippines	40,517	3.8
7 China*	40,422	3.8
8 Guatemala	33,843	3.2
9 Bolivia	32,344	3.0
10 Ethiopia	27,703	2.6
11 Peru	27,676	2.6
12 Other Western Africa**	25,270	2.4
13 Honduras	22,763	2.1
14 Iran	20,443	1.9
15 Nigeria	20,277	1.9
16 United Kingdom	19,143	1.8
17 Pakistan	18,558	1.7
18 Ghana	16,969	1.6
19 Germany	16,240	1.5
20 Jamaica	15,254	1.4
21 Africa, n.e.c.***	14,185	1.3
22 Taiwan	12,845	1.2
23 Trinidad and Tobago	12,639	1.2
24 Middle Africa	12,316	1.2
25 Canada	12,016	1.1
26 Colombia	11,925	1.1
27 Brazil	10,399	1.0
28 Russia	9,137	0.9
29 Afghanistan	9,014	0.8
30 Dominican Republic	8,662	0.8

*excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan

**"Other Western Africa" does not include Nigeria, Ghana, or Liberia

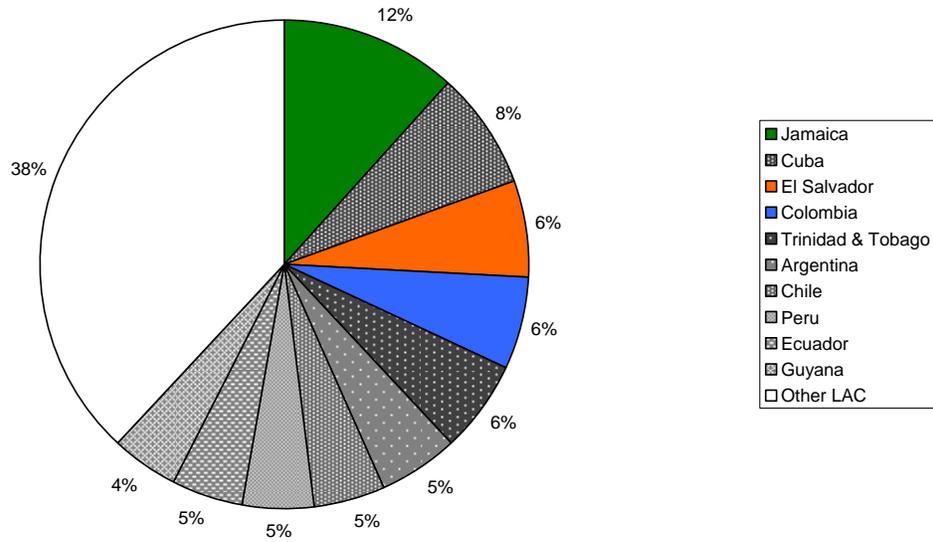
***not elsewhere classified

The shift in the origin composition of greater Washington's Latin American and Caribbean population over the past 25 years is shown in Figure 1. In 1980, immigrants from the region were more likely to hail from South American (37 percent) or Caribbean source countries (26 percent). Twenty-two percent came from English-speaking countries, with Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana all ranking in the top ten origin countries for Latin American immigrants. In total, 37 percent originated in South America, with Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Guyana among the top ten, while 26 percent were from both the English- and Spanish-speaking Caribbean nations of Jamaica, Cuba, Trinidad & Tobago. Only one Central American country was represented in the top ten, El Salvador, holding the third position with 6 percent of the Latin American total.

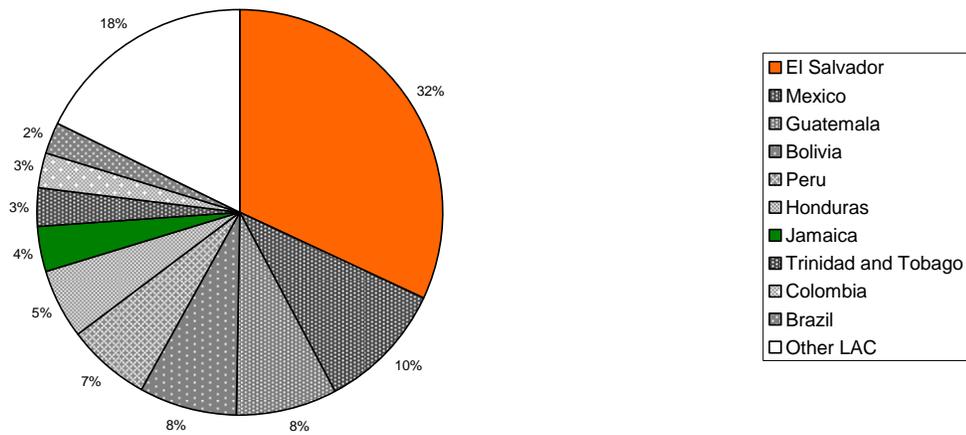
By 2006, a tremendous shift among source countries from that region had occurred. Sixty percent of Latin American and Caribbean immigrants were from Central America. El Salvador and Guatemala (along with Mexico) lead the list, and Honduras ranked sixth among the top ten origins. Another 27 percent were from South American roots including, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia and Brazil. Among the English-speaking nations, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago dropped from first and fifth to seventh and eighth places, respectively, while Guyana fell out of the top ten (although the absolute size of their populations more than doubled during that period).

Notably, the Mexican population has grown quickly in the Washington region, with a 21-fold increase between 1980 and 2006. Like in other East Coast metropolitan areas, Mexican migration is a relatively new phenomenon in Washington and is reflective of the overall spread of the Mexican population to new destination areas.

**National Origins of Latin American Immigrants
in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1980**



**National Origins of Latin American Immigrants
in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 2006**



B. Washington’s Latin American and Caribbean population has grown six-fold over the past 25 years, numbering approximately 420,000 in 2006. In addition, following metropolitan-wide growth and development patterns, Latin American immigrants are increasingly settling in suburban areas.

Region wide, the Latin American immigrant population is growing faster than the foreign-born population as a whole. Over the 1980-2006 period, the foreign-born population grew by 316 percent to just over 1 million persons. The Latin American immigrant population grew at nearly twice that rate at 600 percent, rising from 60,000 immigrants in 1980 to nearly 420,000 in 2006. The fast immigrant growth contributed to a relatively swift-paced rate of overall population growth, which was also fueled by the migration of native born and natural increase.

Table 2. Total Population, Total Foreign Born, and Latin American Foreign-Born Population Change in the Washington Metropolitan Area 1980-2006

	Number				Percent Change			
	1980	1990	2000	2006	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2006	1980-2006
Latin American Foreign Born	59,823	161,663	319,903	417,885	170.2	97.9	30.6	598.5
Total Foreign Born	255,439	488,283	829,310	1,063,033	91.2	69.8	28.2	316.2
Total Population	3,397,935	4,122,914	4,796,183	5,288,670	21.3	16.3	10.3	55.6

Source: 1980, 1990, 2000 Census and ACS 2006

This growth has not been evenly spread through the metropolitan area. Previous research about immigrants in metropolitan Washington found that as more immigrants have located in the region, their settlement patterns have become more dispersed. At the same time, areas in the core and inner suburbs are becoming denser with immigrants, especially in the first and second ring of suburban jurisdictions (Singer 2003, Price and Singer, forthcoming).

Although Latin American settlement in the region occurred first in the District of Columbia, by 1980, Montgomery County had more Latin American immigrants than the District (see Table 3). By 1990, the three large inner suburban counties of Montgomery, Fairfax and Prince George’s each had as many or more Latin American immigrants than the District, nearly tripling their respective populations. Together they housed more than 100,000 Latin American

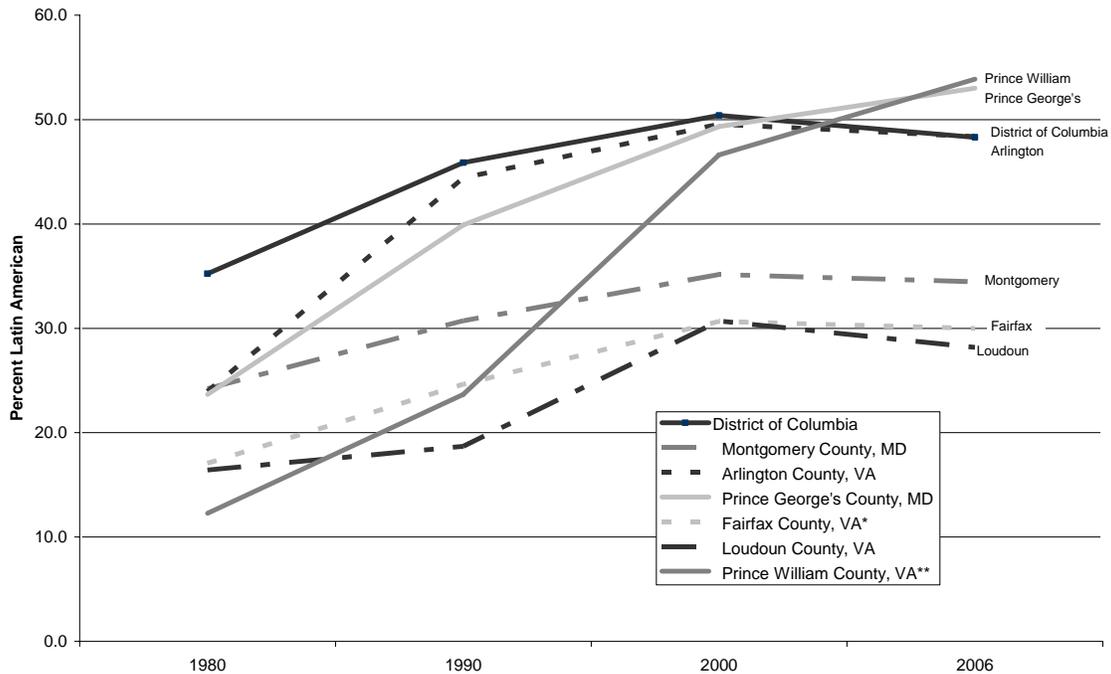
immigrants in 1990 and over 250,000 by 2006 while the District had leveled off to approximately 37,000. Most notable is the decline in Latin American immigrants in Arlington County in recent years. Although Arlington's Latin American immigrant population had been increasing at a rate similar to Alexandria and the inner suburbs in the 1980s, the growth rate decreased during the 1990s (as did the city of Washington and the inner suburbs). Since 2000, however, it appears that Arlington has lost a few thousand Latin American immigrants or 14 percent.

See Table 3. Latin American Foreign-born Population by Jurisdiction in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1980-2006 in Appendix.

By far the fastest and most recent growth has occurred in the outer suburbs, particularly Loudoun and Prince William counties. Both counties had very few Latin American immigrants before 2000 but between 2000 and 2006, the Latin American immigrant population nearly tripled. Prince William County registers the fastest growth rate among jurisdictions, and with more than 42,000 Latin American immigrants, it surpassed the District in absolute terms by 2006. It is no surprise that the most contentious debate in the region regarding immigration is taking place here.

The differential growth trends of Latin American immigrants and other foreign-born groups are evident in the share of the foreign-born population from Latin America. Latin Americans make up approximately half of all immigrants in the District, Arlington, Prince George's and Prince William counties. It is notable that by 2006 more than half of all immigrants living in Prince George's and Prince William counties were born in Latin America and both more than doubled that share between 1980 and 2006.

Figure 2. Latin American Percent of the Total Foreign Born, Washington Metropolitan Area 1980-2006



Montgomery and Fairfax counties, despite the growth in absolute terms, had relatively smaller proportions of their immigrant populations that were Latin American born. This indicates that other immigrant groups were also growing quickly.. In both Fairfax and Loudoun counties, for example, the Asian population composed more than one-half of the foreign-born population. And in Prince George's County, Africans made up a higher percent of the foreign-born population than in any other jurisdiction, 27 percent.

C. One-third of Washington's Latin American immigrants arrived in the United States since 2000. This figure is higher than regional and national figures but varies across local jurisdictions.

Not only are many immigrants new to the Washington metropolitan area, they are relative newcomers to the United States. Thirty percent of all foreign born in the region arrived in the United States since 2000. Higher still are the Latin American immigrants; 34 percent arrived in the past six years. This is higher than the national average, which was only 25 percent. One

surprising finding is that Arlington County has a very high share of Latin American newcomers (those who entered the United States since 2000) despite decline in their absolute numbers in the past six years.

See Table 4. Period of Entry for Latin American & Caribbean Immigrants in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 2006 in Appendix.

Thirty-one percent of Latin American immigrants in Washington arrived in the United States in the 1990s. Combined with those who entered in the most recent period, nearly two-thirds of all Latin American immigrants arrived since 1990. As expected, the outer suburbs had the smallest proportions of Latin American immigrants who had been in the United States since before 1980 (Loudoun 7.4 and Prince William 7.2 percent), in contrast to the District's 17 percent. Surprisingly, Prince William County registered a comparatively smaller proportion (29 percent) of the most recent arrivals (since 2000), closer to the regional average.

The recent immigration of the Latin American immigrant population to the United States helps to explain differences in rates of naturalization among Latin American immigrants.³ Overall, naturalization is lower for Mexicans and Central Americans; about one in five have become U.S. citizens, compared to 36 percent for South Americans and 56 percent for Caribbeans.

Table 5. Percent Naturalized by Latin American Sub-region of Birth of Immigrants in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 2006

	Caribbean	Mexico	Other Central America	South America
District of Columbia	51.9	21.3	14.3	33.1
Inner Core				
Arlington County, VA	44.3	39.3	23.5	17.5
Alexandria city, VA				
Inner Suburbs				
Montgomery County, MD	49.6	49.3	24.4	37.6
Prince George's County, MD	57.0	9.2	16.7	51.5
Fairfax County, VA	61.0	12.2	23.9	38.1
Outer Suburbs				
Loudoun County, VA	46.2	34.4	10.4	44.7
Prince William County, VA	83.6	8.6	16.0	23.2
Remainder of Metropolitan Area				

Total Washington Metropolitan Area	56.1	18.6	20.0	36.1
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Among the jurisdictions, it is interesting to note where the highest rates of naturalization are and among whom: among Mexicans in Montgomery County, South Americans in Prince George's county, and nearly across the board for Caribbeans. Central Americans have consistently low rates of naturalization across all places in the region. The Mexicans and Central Americans have been in the United States for less time than the other groups, and this is reflected in their propensity to become U.S. citizens. An obstacle for Central Americans is that a large number have Temporary Protected Status, a legal status that allows them to live and work temporarily but does not put them on a pathway to citizenship.⁴

D. Washington's Latin American immigrant population is comprised largely of working-age adults with high rates of employment but skills that limit their labor market performance. More than one-third are lacking a high school diploma, two-thirds are not proficient in English, and more than one-third of those employed work in blue-collar service occupations.

With regard to basic demographic features, the Latin American immigrant population looks quite different than the total population of the Washington region. The comparisons in this section are for the metropolitan area as a whole for 2006 only. (See Table 6.)

**Table 6. Demographic, Social, and Economic Characteristics
for Latin American Immigrants and Total Population
in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 2006**

	Latin American Immigrants		Total Population	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	421,587	100.0	5,220,055	100.0
Race and Ethnicity				
Hispanic/Latino	361,464	85.7	612,929	11.7
NH-White	12,829	3.0	2,684,441	51.4
NH-Black	41,962	10.0	1,363,698	26.1
NH-Asian & Pacific Islander	1,718	0.4	446,347	8.6
NH-Other^	3,614	0.9	102,201	2.0
NH-American Indian or Alaskan native	0	0.0	10,439	0.2
Age and Sex				
Males, total	223,237	100.0	2,543,732	100.0
<18 years	18,197	8.2	661,627	26.0
18-64 years	195,573	87.6	1,669,379	65.6
65+ years	9,467	4.2	212,726	8.4
Females, total	198,350	100.0	2,676,323	100.0
<18 years	14,106	7.1	624,284	23.3
18-64 years	169,004	85.2	1,761,739	65.8
65+ years	15,240	7.7	290,300	10.8
Total	421,587	100.0	5,220,055	100.0
<18 years	32,303	7.7	1,285,911	24.6
18-64 years	364,577	86.5	3,431,118	65.7
65+ years	24,707	5.9	503,026	9.6
Sex Ratio, 18-64	113		95	
Educational Attainment				
Total, age 25+	338,628	100.0	3,461,264	100.0
Less than high school	126,885	37.5	359,296	10.4
High school graduate	84,289	24.9	717,728	20.7
Some college/AA degree	61,711	18.2	776,710	22.4
Bachelor's degree or higher	65,743	19.4	1,607,530	46.4
English Ability				
Population age 5+ who speak a language other than English at home	357,364	100.0	1,190,644	100.0
Limited English Proficient*	238,366	66.7	517,066	43.4
Not Limited English Proficient	118,998	33.3	673,578	56.6
Household Characteristics				
Median Household Income**	\$55,456	--	\$79,223	--
Mean Household Size (persons per household)	3.36	--	2.51	--
Mean Persons per Room	0.66	--	0.44	--
Homeowners	81,879	56.0	1,297,178	67.6

Linguistically Isolated	50,549	34.6	104,114	5.4
Poverty Status				
Living below poverty line	37,049	9.0	301,483	5.9
Living at or above poverty line	372,751	91.0	4,770,459	94.1
Living below 200% of poverty line	115,795	28.3	802,237	15.8
Living at or above 200% of poverty line	294,005	71.7	4,269,705	84.2
Employment Status				
Total, in the labor force	309,742	100.0	2,955,397	100.0
Employed	295,456	95.4	2,819,468	95.4
Unemployed	14,286	4.6	135,929	4.6
Not in the labor force	85,059	20.2	1,122,976	21.5
Occupation				
Total workers age 16+	343,390	100.0	3,386,407	100.0
Service	113,079	32.9	523,841	15.5
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	54,297	15.8	125,728	3.7
Food Prep and Serving Related	38,028	11.1	152,336	4.5
Personal Care and Services	14,287	4.2	110,335	3.3
Healthcare Support	5,309	1.5	49,425	1.5
Protective Services	0	0.0	86,017	2.5
Construction, Extraction, Maintenance, and Repair	80,955	23.6	244,606	7.2
Construction and Extraction	68,090	19.8	166,531	4.9
Installation, Maintenance and Repair	12,865	3.7	78,075	2.3
Management, Professional & Related	63,736	18.6	1,597,038	47.2
Management	19,590	5.7	415,269	12.3
Business and Financial	11,066	3.2	235,409	7.0
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	7,301	2.1	136,337	4.0
Education, Training, Library	6,424	1.9	201,865	6.0
Computer and Mathematical	6,323	1.8	217,542	6.4
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media	3,633	1.1	100,518	3.0
Life, Physical, and Social Sciences	3,192	0.9	71,859	2.1
Legal	2,916	0.8	91,551	2.7
Architecture & Engineering	2,170	0.6	77,649	2.3
Community and Social Services	1,121	0.3	49,039	1.4
Sales and Office	54,874	16.0	788,382	23.3
Office and Admin. Support	30,246	8.8	472,131	13.9
Sales and Related	24,628	7.2	316,251	9.3
Production, Transportation and Material Moving	28,946	8.4	202,035	6.0
Transportation and Material Moving	16,682	4.9	128,657	3.8
Production	12,264	3.6	73,378	2.2
Other***	1,800	0.5	30,505	0.9

^includes "some other race" and "two or more races."

*LEP is defined as speaking English less than "very well."

**in July 2006 dollars

***includes Farming, Fishing & Forestry, and Military occupations

Source: Author's calculations of ACS 2006 PUMS data

The Latin American immigrant population is dominated by adults of working ages (18-64). Over 86 percent are in that age group, while only 66 percent of the region's total population is in that range. The Latin American immigrant population has proportionally fewer children than the total population (8 versus 25 percent), while six percent are elderly, compared with ten percent of the total population. In the working ages, there are 16 percent more men than women, not a trend you see in the total population, which has fewer than 100 men to every 100 women.

The educational attainment of Latin American immigrants reflects their status as immigrants who come to the United States in search of low-skilled jobs. Although the immigrant population looks similar to the total population in terms of percentage who have graduated from high school (25 percent), a much higher proportion has no high school degree (38 percent). In addition, they are less likely to have a college degree or graduate degree than the total population.

Fully two-thirds of this population is considered to be limited in their English proficiency (that is, they speak English less than "very well.") Given the recentness of their arrival, this is not surprising, and it is higher than the regional average, which includes immigrants from other world regions who have a different skill composition and who have been in the United States longer.

Household income is 43 percent lower among Latin American immigrants (\$55,456) as compared with the region's median household income (\$79,223).⁵ In addition, household size is larger than the metropolitan-wide average, 3.36 as compared with 2.51. At the metropolitan level, there is no evidence of overcrowding as measured by the standard of more than one person per room. Levels of poverty (nine percent) are higher for Latin American immigrants than the total population (six percent); 28 percent of Latin American immigrants live below 200 percent of the official poverty line, compared to sixteen percent of the total metropolitan population. Despite the trends in poverty, more than half (56 percent) of Latin American householders own their own homes as compared with 68 percent of all householders in the region.

The working lives of Washington's Latin American immigrants are both very similar and very different than the region's profile. Latin American immigrants have very high rates of employment (95 percent), and low unemployment (5 percent), identical to the regional averages. Where Latin Americans differ greatly from the total population is in their occupations. One-third of Latin American immigrants work in a service occupation, twice the rate of the total population. They are overrepresented in the occupations that clean and maintain buildings and grounds, and they also are highly represented in food service occupations. Also striking is the 24 percent of Latin American immigrants in construction jobs, more than three times the proportion seen among the total population. They are slightly more likely to hold jobs in production, transportation and material moving occupations, which include drivers and freight handlers. Latin Americans are less likely to be working in white collar management and sales jobs than the total population.

Conclusion

Washington's Latin American immigrants have a relatively recent history of settlement in the region, marked by a small early flow of professionals and continuing with a larger flow primarily from the ravaged countries of Central America. While immigrants live in jurisdictions all across the region, they are relative newcomers to some of the farther-flung suburbs. In those places, including Prince William County, we have seen the Latin American immigrant population grow quickly over a very short period. There is some evidence that Latin American immigrants are leaving the core of the region for the suburbs, and media reports suggest that this trend is related to housing affordability, particularly for first-time homebuyers.

While this paper only examines foreign-born Latin American immigrants, their U.S.-born children raise their profile in local schools and neighborhoods. This next generation will be an important part of the region's labor force in the future. Thus, the economic and social integration

of Latin American immigrants into the Washington region is vital for its viability to grow in the globalized economy to which the region is attached. It is in the interest of local institutions, leaders, and the public – as well as immigrants and their children – for incorporation on a grand scale to take place. This should be accomplished (and should be accomplishable) through the two-way process known broadly as immigrant integration. This includes immigrants adapting to their new homes and learning English and becoming actively involved in their communities, as well as members of their new communities sustaining a welcoming environment.

The new policies proliferating across the United States and in some parts of the Washington metropolitan area are partly a result of the newness of immigration to those places and partly a result of the larger and acrimonious national immigration debate. The public is understandably wary about the changes they see happening around them, and the local policy and legislative changes are designed to address that uncertainty. Local officials are feeling pressure to control immigration at the local level, leading to some highly charged political debates. Local officials and other leaders should take the next step in leading the public to an awareness of their local immigrant populations while working with the immigrant community—newcomers and long-term residents alike—to understand the changes better and progress together toward the long-term process of integration.

Appendix.

Table 3. Latin American Foreign-born Population by Jurisdiction in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1980-2006

	Number of Latin American Foreign Born				Percent Change				LAC percent of foreign born			
	1980	1990	2000	2006	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2006	1980-2006	1980	1990	2000	2006
District of Columbia	14,288	27,015	37,079	35,654	89.1	37.3	-3.8	149.5	35.2	45.9	50.4	48.3
Inner Core												
Arlington County, VA	5,352	16,218	26,108	22,551	203.0	61.0	-13.6	321.4	24.0	44.4	49.5	48.4
Alexandria city, VA	2,363	7,311	13,557	NA	209.4	85.4	NA	NA	21.7	40.6	41.6	NA
Inner Suburbs												
Montgomery County, MD	16,974	43,373	81,911	94,141	155.5	88.9	14.9	454.6	24.2	30.7	35.2	34.5
Prince George's County, MD	9,473	27,852	54,522	84,512	194.0	95.8	55.0	792.1	23.7	39.9	49.3	53.0
Fairfax County, VA*	9,636	32,377	75,063	81,173	236.0	131.8	8.1	742.4	17.1	24.6	30.7	30.0
Outer Suburbs												
Loudoun County, VA	302	912	5,871	15,882	202.0	543.8	170.5	5158.9	16.4	18.7	30.7	28.2
Prince William County, VA**	774	3,774	15,008	42,216	387.6	297.7	181.3	5354.3	12.3	23.7	46.6	53.9
Remainder of metropolitan area***	661	2,831	10,784	41,756	328.3	280.9	287.2	6217.1	9.6	24.3	34.9	40.0
Total Washington Metropolitan Area	59,823	161,663	319,903	417,885	170.2	97.9	30.6	598.5	23.4	33.1	38.6	39.3

Sources: 1980 data from the printed Census volumes

1990 data from pdfs of printed volumes

2000 and 2006 data from American FactFinder

*includes the independent cities of Fairfax and Falls Church, except in 2006 when data are unavailable, producing an underestimate of the population

**includes the independent cities of Manassas and Manassas Park, except in 2006 when data are unavailable, producing an underestimate of the population

***in 2006, these data include the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park, in addition to the outer counties, producing an overestimate of the population

Table 4. Period of Entry for Latin American & Caribbean Immigrants in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 2006

	Number				Percent			
	2000 or later	1990-1999	1980-1989	Before 1980	2000 or later	1990-1999	1980-1989	Before 1980
District of Columbia	11,298	9,977	8,283	6,096	31.7	28.0	23.2	17.1
Inner Core								
Arlington County, VA	9,677	6,179	4,167	2,528	42.9	27.4	18.5	11.2
Alexandria city, VA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Inner Suburbs								
Montgomery County, MD	28,685	27,283	24,618	13,555	30.5	29.0	26.2	14.4
Prince George's County, MD	29,324	27,195	17,752	10,241	34.7	32.2	21.0	12.1
Fairfax County, VA	26,325	25,829	20,698	8,321	32.4	31.8	25.5	10.3
Outer Suburbs								
Loudoun County, VA	6,866	4,834	3,009	1,173	43.2	30.4	18.9	7.4
Prince William County, VA	12,390	18,312	8,488	3,026	29.3	43.4	20.1	7.2
Total Washington Metropolitan Area	142,902	131,175	95,461	48,347	34.2	31.4	22.8	11.6
Total ALL IMMIGRANTS Washington Metropolitan Area	328,275	330,610	225,667	178,481	30.9	31.1	21.2	16.8

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¹ Data from the Census Bureau used in this paper refer to the *foreign-born* population, however, the terms *immigrant* and *foreign-born* are used interchangeably. The *foreign-born* population encompasses all persons born outside the United States, including naturalized U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, temporary immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and to the extent to which they are counted, undocumented immigrants.

² Many would argue that Census coverage is not complete and that the size of the Salvadoran and other foreign-born populations are larger than the estimates suggest.

³ These proportions do not take into account length of time in the United States or eligibility for U.S. citizenship. They are simply a gross proportion of the total naturalized in each group.

⁴ The extent to which the undocumented are included in these data would bring down the proportions of immigrants who have naturalized.

⁵ Still, at \$55,456 it is higher than the national median income, \$48, 451.